

# SHARK!



Although they hardly ever attack people—you're much more likely to be struck by lightning than bitten by a shark—great white sharks are built to hunt. To track and eat their favorite foods, they use keen senses, rocket speed, and a mouth full of teeth. (Just be glad their favorite foods are seals and sea lions.)

## Ready or Not, Here I Come

A great white shark is white underneath, but its top half is a dark gray that blends in with the ocean floor. A sea lion bobbing at the ocean's surface doesn't notice the great white lurking below. But even in dark, murky water, the shark spots the sea lion. Camouflaged, it sneaks up from below. Then it strikes.

## Armed to the Teeth

Lightning fast, the great white leaps from the water, mouth open, and clamps down on its prey. Its enormous jaw is filled with hundreds of teeth, their edges lined with sharp points for sawing into food. Every time a tooth falls out, a new one moves up to take its place. A shark uses all these teeth like we use our fingers—to explore or find out about something unfamiliar. Some scientists think that when a great white does bite a person,

it's taking a test bite, to figure out if it's found something worth eating. People are too lean to make a good meal, so the shark usually swims away in search of something fatter. Like a blubbery sea lion.

## You Can Swim but You Can't Hide

As the great white attacks, it rolls its eyes back in its head to keep them from being injured in the fight. Though it can no longer see the struggling sea lion, other senses kick in. Jelly-filled pits on a shark's snout detect the electric signals given off by every living thing. If the sea lion escapes, its faint electric pulse helps the shark find it again. Finally, the shark captures its prey, but it can't eat in peace. The splashes made by the battling shark and sea lion alert more hungry great whites, who have a row of nerves along their sides that sense ripples in the water. They rocket to the surface, ready to fight for a share of the sea lion meal.